



Underground Safety Board Seeks Public Comment on Draft Planning and Design Process Chart and Board Standards

Sacramento – The Underground Safety Board (Board) is seeking public input on its Draft Planning and Design Process Chart and Board Standards from March 24 to April 21. The Board welcomes the input of engineers, utility operators, and construction firms to better understand where information gaps exist in the planning and design process for excavation projects. The Board invites stakeholders and the public to provide written feedback on the draft planning and design process chart (see below).

INTENT AND NEXT STEPS:

- The Board is exploring ways to address the lack of information available for design projects requiring excavation.
- Your feedback will directly shape the development of planning and design standards and future policy discussions.
- Standards will be presented to the public for evaluation, and additional input is sought for further development.
- After adoption by the Board, organizations may choose to implement the guidance in these standards on a voluntary basis.

MORE INFORMATION:

- See the February 2025 staff report that explains: [What is the Planning and Design Process Chart?](#)

COMMENT GUIDANCE

The following is a list of questions to consider when submitting your comment about the chart. It is not necessary to answer every question.

1. **Role:** What is your role in the planning and design of projects requiring excavation? Select which “role” (e.g., “Design Consultant” or “Operator”) on the left side of the chart that best



matches your role, if applicable, and include it with your response. If you believe your role is not listed, please list it. You may skip this question if you do not work with design documents.

2. **Focus: Early-Stage Planning**

a. Targeting of Specific Types of Projects or Stakeholders

- i. What kinds of projects requiring excavation face challenges due to a lack of available information for design or an inability to receive information for design?
- ii. Who (e.g., target audience or group) do you think the Board should request to participate in discussions like these to enable the flow of accurate information for design?

b. Utility Coordination / Construction Collaboration

- i. How might a statewide utility coordination / construction collaboration portal help your planning and design workflow and what top features do you think it should have?
- ii. Operators: Would you be willing to share your construction project information with others as early as when they are at the conceptual planning stage? Why or why not?

3. **Focus: Design Requests** *(For purposes of these requests, a design request is an informal request for utility records using operator contact information provided by the Regional Notification Centers. Under the Dig Safe Act, operators are not currently required to respond to these requests or meet specific quality or timing standards.)*

a. **Submitters**

- i. Who can submit a design request (e.g., engineers, those providing professional services in connection with the project, anyone)?
- ii. How does your organization approach who submits the design request, and is it working the way you believe it should? How might limiting design requests to “qualified” submitters either benefit or harm the workflow?
- iii. Have operators required the submitter of a design request to have certain qualifications in the past? What were / are those requirements? Did the operator explain why?



b. Timing

- i. When (e.g., planning phase, before construction bidding and subsurface utility field investigations), and how far in advance of excavation does your organization first request design information, and does this process work the way you believe it should? Do contracts for the project (design-build, design-bid-build, etc.) affect the process? How?

c. Content

- i. In your experience, what information (e.g., designer's / design consultant's contact information, location and project limits, description of project scope, traffic control, and site access information for operators' locating staff) about the project must you provide to an operator in order to receive design information? Is there information about projects that you would like an operator to know and respond to that is currently ignored? If so, what is it? Is there information you are required to provide that you think is not needed? If so, what is it?

4. Free Comment Section

- a. Please indicate if there any responsibilities, relationships, actions, or roles you would like to see included or altered on this chart.
- b. Please include anything you'd like to say on the topic of California standards for planning and design in general as it relates to excavation.

WRITTEN COMMENT PERIOD

Any interested person, or their authorized representative, may submit written comments on the draft process chart. The comment period begins on March 24, 2025, and ends on April 21, 2025. Comments must be received by **8:00 a.m. (PT) on April 21, 2025**. Additional opportunities for public comment will be available in the future.

Submit written comments to:

- E-filing: [Docket #2025-03-PC: Planning and Design Comment Period](#)
- Email: digboard@energysafety.ca.gov (include in the subject line of the email "**Comments: Planning and Design Chart**")



- Mail to:

Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety

Attn: Jaime Hastings, Underground Infrastructure Directorate, Underground Safety Board

715 P Street, 15th Floor

Sacramento, CA 95814

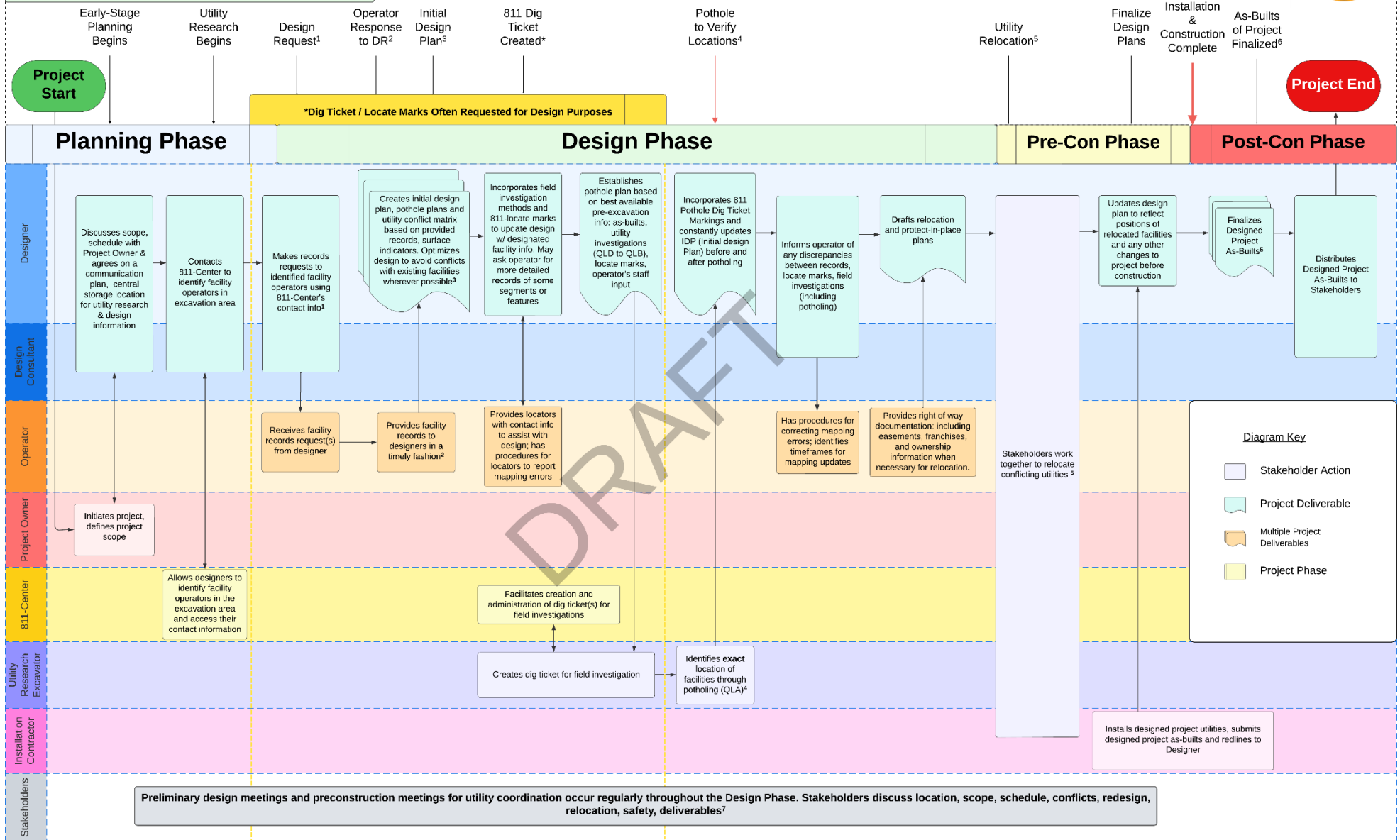
Chart

Planning and Design Process in California



How to use this chart:

- Actions in the process are separated into lanes by "actor"
- Note: items with superscript^{1,2,3} have explanations on following page
- Left-to-right arrows indicate progression to next step
- Vertical lines/arrows indicate communication/exchange between parties



Responsibilities and Actions Not Shown in the Chart

Additional Responsibilities by Event

Initial and Project-Wide Responsibilities

1. Design Request

- Designer provides description of project (scope, location, construction type, excavation footprint, estimated schedule) for which utility info is required
- Designer provides operator with their contact information
- Designer only requests what is needed for the project
- Designer also reaches out to local jurisdictions for rights-of-way or franchise info
- Designer provides traffic control plan and site access information to operator for locating

2. Operator's Response to a Design Request

- Operator provides appropriate maps / drawings of affected utilities in the area
- Operator provides facility information such as type, material, diameter, location, presence of critical / high risk facilities and abandoned lines
- Operator informs designer of appropriate clearances during design process

3. Initial Design Plan

- Designer creates an Initial Design Plan, or preliminary area map using acquired utility information set into a georeferenced / scaled background
- Designer identifies any existing facilities that are insufficiently depicted and/or likely to conflict with the design, requests as-builts for these
- Designer ensures design complies with local, state, federal regulations
- Designer notes clearance requirements for facilities relevant to construction
- Designer includes on design plans positions for facilities that will be relocated

4. Conflict Verification in the Field

- Excavator exposes certain facilities and/or features according to pothole plan
- Excavator reports back to designers and operators any unexpected facilities and/or features that impact design documents

5. Utility Relocation Before Construction

- Stakeholders work together to relocate conflicting facilities according to plans discussed during utility coordination meetings

6. Final Depiction of Installed Facilities

- Designers collaborate closely with installation contractors and other stakeholders to ensure the newly installed buried facilities are accurately represented on the drawings
- Designer completes and records the as-built drawings promptly after the completion of construction

7. Meetings for Utility Coordination

- Designer conducts these meetings as early as the planning or 0% conceptual design phase, and continually throughout the design process. These meetings should be held at several points along the way, including the 30%, 60%, and 90% design progress marks, or at similar points agreed upon by stakeholders.
- All affected operators should attend
- Designer / Design Consultant documents attendance and topics covered

Designer / Design Consultant

- Designers rely on operator mapping information for utility research and for creating designs that reduce the likelihood of line strikes during construction
- Designers conduct preconstruction meetings for planning, utility coordination
- Designers keep all stakeholders informed of design conflicts, redesigns, or project date changes through regular communications
- Designers keep records of all communication with stakeholders, including meeting logs and positive response information
- Designers interface with operators through a lead utility-research-designer if the project work involves the inputs of multiple designers

Operator

- Operators have plans to service design requests; keep contact list(s) for appropriate staff up-to-date at the 811-Centers
- Operators attend preconstruction meetings for utility coordination; communicate with designers during the design process
- Operators use as-built information to update their records for use in responding to 811-notifications, operational and maintenance needs

Utility Research Excavator / Installation Contractor

- Excavators rely on design plans to appropriately cost projects and to implement measures that ensure the safety of workers in the field